



WYOMING-KENTWOOD AREA CHAMBER of COMMERCE

1009 44th Street SW Wyoming, MI 49509-4417 616 531-5990 Fax 531-0252 wyochamb@westmichigan.org

February 3, 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Commission Secretary, Marlene H. Dortch
445 12th Street SW
CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Proceeding 03-16

Dear Ms. Dortch,

At its June 2002 regular Board of Directors meeting, the Wyoming-Kentwood Area Chamber of Commerce formally endorsed efforts by SBC Ameritech and others to encourage the Federal Communications Commission to allow Ameritech into the long distance telecommunications market in Michigan.

The Chamber arrived at this position after a formal and somewhat lengthy process to review the issues involved. The Chamber's standing Government Affairs Committee discussed the issue in detail at two of its monthly meetings and drafted a resolution of support, which was adopted unanimously by the committee. Next, the resolution went to the Chamber Executive Committee for review, where it passed muster and was sent on to our full Board of Directors. After some discussion, the Board members voted unanimously to endorse the position, which would allow Ameritech to offer Long Distance telephone service.

A few of the many reasons cited for this position include a "leveling of the playing field" that will take place by allowing all telecommunications companies to offer any type of service they choose. Consumers, both business and residential, will have the ability to choose a specific provider that more carefully matches their respective needs. Upon the entrance of SBC Ameritech into the Long Distance market in Michigan, Ameritech will create a much more competitive environment for the long distance carriers currently doing business. That competition will result in improved and lower cost services. Additionally, we feel that those same long distance carriers will feel compelled to diversify their customer base and enter into the local telephone business, thereby having the same positive effect for businesses and consumers alike there.

We also understand that certain criteria have been established, which Ameritech had agreed to earlier, that describes the market conditions that must exist prior to Ameritech being allowed to offer long distance service. Based on the information which we have been able to obtain, it appears that most of those conditions now exist or they soon will. One of the major concerns that we have had is the relative monopoly that SBC Ameritech enjoys in the local phone market. However, over the last five years, Ameritech has given up a pretty good share of the market and has lost over a million telephone line accounts.

In short, the Wyoming-Kentwood Area Chamber of Commerce believes that both business and residential telephone customers will benefit by the increased savings from rigorous competition in all areas of telecommunication. We support the efforts to allow SBC Ameritech into the long distance telephone markets and urge the FCC to allow that to happen.

Yours truly,

John J. Crawford
President